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RHAYADER RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Annual Report

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE YEAR 1951

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MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

YEAR 1951

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Vice-Chairman - Councillor E. GORDON P. DAVIES, C.C.

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C. H. Price
W. A. Price
W. T. Ritchie
J. D. Williams
T. E. Williams

Medical Officer of Health
(Part time)

J. D. O'MAHONY POOLE, M.B., Ch.B.

Sanitary Inspector

H. J. SLEIGH (to February, 1951)

G. H. ROBERTS, M.R.S.I., M.S.I.A. (from March, 1951)

BRYNCOED,
RHAYADER

To the Chairman and Members of the
Rural District Council of Rhayader

Gentlemen,

I have the honor to present to you my Annual Report as Medical Officer of Health, for the year 1951.

The general health of the district has been good, but the incidence of infectious disease somewhat high.

By the end of the year all preparatory steps had been taken for a water supply scheme for Pantydwr and St. Harmon. Plans have been prepared for a housing site, sewerage scheme and water supply, mainly for Forestry Workers of the Bwlchysarnau District.

A scheme to supplement the water supply at Llanyre was submitted to the Ministry, but the source was not acceptable. Accordingly, steps were taken to prepare an alternative scheme whereby water might be taken from the Birmingham Aqueduct.

Considerable efforts have been made to build more houses and there appears to be a reasonable prospect that the problem will be solved within the next two years. It is hoped that work will soon be commenced on the removal of unfit houses.

In Rhayader the water supply was satisfactory. A considerable amount of work remains to be done under the Public Health Act and Water Act, 1945, in the matter of taking the supply into the houses in pipes.

It is to be regretted that the bulk of milk is still retailed by the "bucket and dipper" method. This involves a danger of contamination and the supply of fat deficient milk.

After a lapse of several years the routine sampling of milk has been recommenced.

Hitherto the offices of Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor have been combined. A full time Sanitary Inspector has now been appointed, this arrangement has great advantages and more time can be devoted to the sanitary supervision of the district.

I would like to express my gratitude for the co-operation and help given me at all times, by the officials, and to thank the Chairman and Members of the Council for all their assistance throughout the year.

I remain,

Your obedient Servant,

J. D. O'MAHONY POOLE

Medical Officer of Health

STATISTICS OF THE AREA

Area of District	91,140 acres
Estimated Population	4,576
Number of Inhabited houses	1,332
Rateable Value	£115,649
Product of a Penny Rate	£480

Rhayader is an agricultural district in the Cambrian Mountains. It is from this district that the water supply for the City of Birmingham is drawn, there being four reservoirs in the Elan Valley. The largest dam of the series, now under construction, is to be opened by Her Majesty The Queen on October 23rd 1952.

HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA

The district is served by one part-time Medical Officer of Health and one Sanitary Inspector. Until March, 1951, the office of Sanitary Inspector was combined with that of Surveyor, separate appointments have now been made for the two offices.

Bacteriological examinations of milk and water are carried out by the Public Health Laboratory Service, Aberystwyth, who have also carried out examinations of diseased animals slaughtered at the local abattoir. At this point I would like to express my thanks to the Laboratory for their helpfulness and ready co-operation.

Chemical analyses of water were made by the County Analyst, Carmarthen.

Welfare clinics for Mothers and Infants are held monthly in Rhayader.

Clinics are available at Llandrindod Wells for Tuberculosis, and Hereford for Venereal Disease. The Chest Physician attends a weekly clinic in Llandrindod.

There are no hospitals in the district, but hospital services were provided during the year at Knighton, Llandrindod, Shrewsbury, Gobowen, Birmingham and Llanidloes.

VITAL STATISTICS

BIRTHS

	Male	Female	Corrected Rate per 1000 pop.	England & Wales	Rate for Large Towns	Rate for Small Towns
LIVE BIRTHS :—						
Legitimate	28	29				
Illegitimate	2	—				
Totals	30	29	15.9	15.5	17.3	16.7
STILL BIRTHS :—						
Legitimate	1	3				
Illegitimate	—	1				
Totals	1	4	1.3	0.36	0.45	0.38

DEATHS

All causes	42	32	13.6	12.5	13.4	12.5
Deaths of Infants			(Rate per 1,000 Live Births)			
Under 1 year	1	1				
Under 1 month	1	1				
Totals	2	2	67.8	29.6	33.9	27.6

CAUSES OF DEATH

	Male	Female
Tuberculosis (Respiratory) ...	1	0
Infective and parasitic diseases ...	1	0
Malignant neoplasms	8	4
Leukaemia, aleukaemia ...	1	0
Diabetes	0	1
Vascular lesions of nervous system	4	5
Diseases of the heart	18	13
Other diseases of circulatory system	0	1
Influenza	2	0
Pneumonia	0	0
Bronchitis	2	1
Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea ...	0	1
Hyperplasia of prostate ...	1	0
Congenital malformations ...	1	0
Other defined and ill-defined diseases	2	6
Motor Accidents	1	0
Maternal Mortality	—	0
	42	32

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES

Measles occurred in epidemic form in the first quarter of the year.

	No. of cases notified
Measles	112
Pneumonia	4

TUBERCULOSIS

Number of fresh cases notified during the year :—

	Male	Female	Total
Pulmonary	4	5	9
Non-Pulmonary	—	—	—
Totals	4	5	9

Number of cases on register at 31st December, 1951 :—

	Male	Female	Total
Pulmonary	12	18	30
Non-Pulmonary	5	5	10
Totals	17	23	40

During the year the district was visited by the Mobile X Ray Unit when 642 people were examined. Nine cases needed further observation for pulmonary T. B. and a positive diagnosis was later made in one case.

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION

Number of children who completed a full course of primary immunisation during the year was 46.

Number of children who were given a secondary injection during the year was one.

Age Group	Number Immunised	Estimated Child Population
Under 1 year	7	
Age 1 year	28	
Age 2 years	5	307
Age 3 years	1	
Age 4 years	2	
Age 5-9 years	3	628
Age 10-14 years	—	
Totals	46	935

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, 1948

Section 47 - Removal to suitable premises of persons in need of care and attention.

No formal action was taken under this section of the Act, but during the year one person was removed voluntarily. He was returned to his home after it had been cleaned and he had recovered in health. Arrangements have now been made for him to receive assisted domestic help, since when there has been a great improvement in his health and appearance.

There seems to be a need for an extension of the domestic help service, but difficulty is experienced in finding suitable persons willing to work in the conditions sometimes found.

BLINDNESS

No action was taken under Section 176 of the Public Health Act, 1936.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

PUBLIC WATER SUPPLIES

Quantity. Supplies were sufficient throughout the district with the exception of the Llanyre area for a short period.

Quality. Twenty-six samples were taken for analysis, all were satisfactory.

During the period of shortage in Llanyre complaints were received of the taste. A sample taken at the same time, however, proved to be satisfactory.

The supply from the Birmingham Aqueduct tends to be discoloured by peat but is otherwise satisfactory.

Plumbo-solvency. The Birmingham supply is treated so as to neutralise acidity. The other supplies are all plumbo-solvent, but as far as is known, there are few lead pipes used and precautions are not taken.

General. Owing to the scattered nature of the district it is impossible to use one supply, accordingly there are ten separate undertakings all owned by the Council. Three of these are from the Birmingham Aqueduct, the rest from springs and streams.

Schemes for supplying St. Harmon and another for an extension of the Llanyre supply are proposed. When these

are completed it will mean that nearly every group of houses in the district has a piped water supply.

Appendix 1 at the end, shows typical analyses of supplies of water.

Appendix 2 is a table showing population and houses served. These figures are not so unfavourable as they appear when it is realised that the area of the district is approximately 142 square miles, that the average density of population is 0.05 per acre, and that the largest parish is 32,172 acres with a population of only 530.

PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES

The many farmsteads and cottages scattered throughout the district draw water mainly from individual supplies and a considerable number are being assisted by Government Grants to pipe water into the house.

In connection with these grants, forty-one samples of private water supplies were taken, seventeen of these were unsatisfactory. In three of these cases the water supply produced a satisfactory analysis after the supply had been properly cleaned and protected.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE

Rhayader and Cwmdauddwr

A Public Enquiry was held regarding the proposals to renew the sewerage for the town of Rhayader. No further development took place.

Newbridge-on-Wye

Application was made to connect 23 properties to the new Public Sewers.

Crossgates and Fron

The sewerage scheme was completed during the year and 17 properties connected to the sewers.

Bwlchysarnau

A scheme was prepared to provide sewers for the existing properties in Bwlchysarnau and for a proposed Housing Site of 14 houses.

PUBLIC CLEANSING

During the year a Ford Refuse Collection Vehicle was purchased and the work of collecting transferred from contract to direct labour. Arrangements were made to use outbuildings at Brynafon, Rhayader for paper storage and waste paper salvage was commenced.

District refuse collection covers all centres of population in the district. The collection is divided into three categories :—

(a) Rhayader, Cwmdauddwr and Elan Valley-twice weekly

(b) Newbridge-on-Wye, Llanyre, Fron and Crossgates Penybont Village-weekly

(c) Pantydwr, St. Harmon, Bwlchysarnau, Abbeycwmhir, Nantmel, Doldowlod, and all premises on the main roads travelled on these routes-fortnightly

Refuse is being tipped at Gravel Road, Gwystre and The Bog, Newbridge, in addition to The Gro, Rhayader.

Controlled tipping methods are used.

PUBLIC CEMETERY

There were four burials during the year.

BUILDINGS

No. of Plans (of all types) submitted	52
No. of Building Licences issued to private owners	2
No. of houses completed and occupied by private owners ...	3
No. of houses completed and let by Local Authority ...	8
No. of houses let to contract during the year...	Nil
No. of houses site selected and preliminary work in hand ...	36
No. of houses in course of construction by Local Authority	6
No. of Improvement grants approved	4

SANITARY INSPECTION OF AREA

Visits re :—	Inspection	Re-Inspection
Rural Housing Survey	30	2
Allocation of Council houses	36	22
Housing Regulations	18	56
Sanitary defects...	20	39
Moveable dwellings	1	1
Verminous premises	2	4
Dirty premises	1	8
Water supply	50	40
Drains - inspected	12	4
,, - tested	1	—
Cesspools and closets	1	—
Factories - power	4	—
,, - non power	3	2
Ponds, ditches and watercourses ...	3	10
Animals so kept as to be a nuisance ...	1	3
Rats and mice - general	3	1
,, ,, - in sewers	3	3
Closet conversion	24	30
Petroleum Regulations	3	—
Interviews	32	—
Miscellaneous	3	—
Totals	253	228

No. of complaints received	43
No. of complaints in which action was taken	34
No. of houses inspected for defects ...	50
No. of informal notices served :—	
dwelling houses	27
other premises	7
No. of informal notices complied with :—	
dwelling houses	31
other premises	7
No. of statutory notices served :—	
Housing Act, Section 11	3
Public Health Act	4
No. of statutory notices complied with :—	
Housing Act, Section 11	Owners in all cases gave an undertaking not to re-let.
Public Health Act	4

HOUSING

There remains a considerable amount of work to be done under the Housing Act, 1936 and there are several groups which should be taken as Clearance Areas. It is proposed that one such group in the Rhayader Parish will be dealt with in the coming year.

The Rural Housing Survey has not been completed, but figures to date show that about 12% of the total inspected fall within Category 5, while 75% are in need of repair.

Rents of the bulk of the cottages are £7 to £12 per annum and great difficulty is experienced in effecting repairs as the cost of even minor items can be termed unreasonable within the meaning of the Act. Moreover, large numbers of people on pensions or the local low wages, cannot afford to accept the tenancy of a new Council house, the rent of which would be 4 - 5 times as great as their present rental.

Conditions are not improved by the fact that it is difficult to get work done by the local contractors within a reasonable time.

RIVERS AND STREAMS

Action was taken in several cases to prevent householders disposing of the contents of bucket closets by emptying into a nearby stream. While these closets remain there will always be a temptation to dispose of the contents in this manner, moreover, many farms have privies constructed directly over a stream or watercourse, some of which have flowing water only in wet weather.

In Newbridge, several houses drain directly into streams; these will eventually be connected to the new public sewer.

In Rhayader the same conditions obtain as in Newbridge but the new sewerage system is not yet in sight.

SWIMMING BATHS

There are no public swimming baths, and a portion of the Wye at Rhayader is used by children for swimming and paddling. This part is about 100 - 150 yards downstream from a sewer outfall. It is hoped that the new sewerage scheme for Rhayader will soon be commenced to obviate any danger from this source.

ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION

There is no atmospheric Pollution.

RATS AND MICE DESTRUCTION

General. Knighton and Rhayader R.D.Cs. employ an operative who works alternate periods of two months in each district.

A summary of the work done is as follows:--

No. of farms in district	402
No. of farms surveyed	349
No. of farms found to be infested :—	
Major infestations	2
Minor infestations	12
Of these farms only 6 were found to be so infested as to warrant taking up a contract with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries)	
No. of dwelling houses inspected	24
No. of dwelling houses infested	7
No. of dwelling houses treated	7
No. of business premises inspected	53
No. of business premises infested	23
No. of business premises treated	23
Total No. of premises inspected	426
Total No. of premises infested	44
Total No. of premises treated	30
Estimated No. of rats killed	189
No. of bodies seen	27

The low incidence of rats at farms in this district seems to be due to three factors:—

(a) The isolated nature of most of the farms

(b) The pastoral type of farming which does not involve carrying large stocks of food

(c) Small amount of corn grown

Sewer Treatment. There are three sewerage systems, these have a total of 142 manholes. During the year 81 manholes were treated, only 5 were found to be infested.

FACTORIES ACTS

No. of power factories on register	21
No. of non-power factories on register...	2
No. of inspections made	9

Informal action was taken in three cases

MEAT AND OTHER FOODS

Byelaws. Byelaws were made under Section 15 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938 for the handling and wrapping of food. These were confirmed by the Minister and came into operation on the 17th December, 1951.

Milk. There are two dealers and 45 producer-retailers of milk in the district.

Six producer-retailers hold T.T. licences but this milk, together with the bulk of the milk, is retailed loose. In the absence of a court decision this method of distribution appears to be perpetuated by the Ministry of Food definition of "final delivery on retail sale" in the Milk and Dairies Regulations, 1949.

Routine milk sampling had not been done for a number of years, but with the facilities for sampling available at Aberystwyth, routine samples are now being taken. Four samples taken were unsatisfactory.

No action was taken under Section 20, Milk and Dairies Regulations, 1949.

Slaughterhouse. There is one slaughterhouse in Rhayader on lease to the Ministry of Food; this is not up to the standard required.

Meat and Food Inspection

Weight of all meat condemned	4,783 lbs.
Weight of other foods condemned	184 lbs.
	4,967 lbs.

CARCASES INSPECTED AND CONDEMNED

	Cattle not Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep	Pigs
Number killed	68	14	51	1,893	49
Number inspected	68	14	51	1,893	49
All diseases except T.B. :—					
Whole carcases condemned	1	2	2	23	3
Carcases of which some part or organ condemned ...	41	10	—	874	12
Percentage affected with some disease	62%	86%	4%	47%	30%
T.B. only :—					
Whole carcases condemned	—	1	—	—	—
Carcases of which some part or organ condemned ...	2	—	—	—	1
Percentage affected with tuberculosis	3%	7%	—	—	2%

Appendix 1 TYPICAL ANALYSES OF PUBLIC WATER SUPPLIES

Source	Rhayader	Llanyre	Nantmel	Gaufron	Bwlchysarnau	Birmingham Supply	Newbridge
Free Ammonia	0.002	0.003	Nil	Trace	Nil	0.002	0.002
Albuminoid Ammonia	0.003	0.005	Trace	0.002	0.002	0.005	0.006
Chlorides as CL2	1.80	2.20	2.0	1.10	1.90	1.30	1.70
Calculated as Common Salt	2.97	3.63	3.30	1.82	3.14	2.14	2.80
Total Solids	4.5	6.0	11.0	7.5	6.0	4.0	7.5
Nitrates	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Trace
Nitrites	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Oxygen consumed at 27°C in 4 hours ...	0.109	Nil	0.004	0.085	Nil	0.125	0.046
,, ,, ,, in 15 mins. ...	0.048	Nil	Nil	0.041	Nil	0.081	0.022
Lime as CaO	0.31	0.39	1.79	1.01	1.23	0.34	0.68
Total Alkalinity as Ca CO3	1.5	2.0	5.5	2.5	4.5	2.0	1.5
Total hardness	1.5	2.0	5.5	2.5	4.5	2.0	1.5
pH Value	9.5	7.1	9.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	5.9
pH S	7.1	9.5	8.5	9.1	8.7	9.2	9.5
Saturation Index (Langelier)	-2.4	-2.4	+1.0	-2.6	-2.2	-2.7	-3.6
Colour (Hazen Units)	5	0	0	15	0	40	0
No. of organisms per cc developed on Agar during 48 Hours at 37°C ...	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
No. of organisms per cc developed on Agar during 48 Hours at 22°C ...	19	19	10	9	9	9	10
Coliform organisms per 100 cc ...	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Faecal Coli per 100 cc	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

Appendix 2 DETAILS OF WATER SUPPLIES

Parish	No. of Supplies	Houses and Population Served by Council Mains From :						Total Houses Served	Total Houses in Parish	Population Served	Total Population in Parish 1948	Acreage of Parish
		Internal Piped Supplies		Private Standpipes		Communal Standpipes						
		Houses	Population	Houses	Population	Houses	Population					
Abbeycwmhir	2	7	25	1	4	3	11	11	73	40	260	11345
Cefnllys	-	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	27	—	100	3956
Llansantffraed Cwmdauddwr ... x	1	28	98	16	56	10	24	54	153	178	530	32172
Rhayader x		247	889	46	104	52	107	345	345	1100	1100	194
Llanbadarn Fawr ... x	1	44	154	6	10	5	12	55	154	176	540	3871
Llanfihangel-Helygen	-	2	8	—	—	—	—	2	15	8	53	1470
Llanyre	2	97	330	23	78	23	53	143	209	461	725	5915
Nantmel	4	40	129	7	19	11	24	58	222	172	830	16934
St. Harmon x	-	1	3	—	—	—	—	1	144	3	560	15383
Totals ...	10	466	1,636	99	271	104	231	669	1342	2138	4698	91240

x.—Chlorinated Supplies